

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed November 14, 2007 has been received and the Examiner's comments carefully reviewed. Claims 1, 3, 8 and 13 have been amended. No new subject matter has been added. Claims 1-19 are currently pending. Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are in condition for allowance.

Support for the amendments to claims 1, 8, and 13 is found in the specification, for example, in FIGS. 1, 5, 7-17 and 20, which each depict the limitations added.

Finality of Office Action Premature

The Office Action Summary of November 14, 2007 indicates that the Office Action is FINAL. Applicants respectfully submit that the finality of the last Office Action is premature.

In particular, any subsequent action on the merits of an application cannot be made final if it includes a new ground of rejection that is neither necessitated by the Applicants' amendment of the claims nor based on art cited in an Information Disclosure Statement. M.P.E.P. 706.07(a). The Examiner introduced new grounds for rejections based upon the newly cited art of Benda et al. (U.S. Patent 6,241,562), Campbell et al. (U.S. Patent 7,187,555), Richard (U.S. Patent 4,441,140), Ross (U.S. Patent 6,570,770), and Wong (U.S. Patent 6,028,771). Combinations of the aforementioned newly cited art were used as a basis to reject claims 1-12, 14-15, and 17-19. None of claims 1-12, 14-15, and 17-19 were amended in the prior Amendment; and the newly cited art was not submitted by Applicants in an Information Disclosure Statement.

Applicants therefore respectfully submit that finality of the Office Action of November 14, 2007 is premature, and request withdrawal of the finality.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

I. Claims 1-3 and 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Benda et al. (U.S. Patent 6,241,562) in view of Campbell et al. (U.S. 7,187,555). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, but have amended claim 1 to advance this application to allowance.

The claimed invention relates to a module having an interchangeable card. The housing of the module is designed to accommodate the interchangeability. Claim 1 has been amended to recite structural limitations that promote this interchangeable feature by way of a smaller, light-weight housing. The smaller, light-weight housing is easy to handle, provides access to the snap-fit securing arrangement, and further reduces manufacturing costs associated with larger, bulkier prior art housing constructions.

In particular, claim 1 recites a module including a one-piece housing having a generally L-shaped construction. The L-shaped construction is defined by a face plate and a housing side. A module card is attached to the one-piece housing. The housing side of the one-piece housing extends less than a substantial majority of the length of the module card such that a substantial portion of the rear end of the module card is exposed. The exposed substantial portion of the rear end of the module card extends between a top edge of the module card and a bottom edge.

Benda teaches a two-piece housing 20, 30 designed to completely enclose a printed circuit board 200. Each of the housing pieces 20, 30 extends along the entire length of the printed circuit board 200. Campbell does not make up for the deficiencies of Benda, as Campbell similarly teaches an enclosure 108 that extends along a substantial majority of the length of a circuit board 108. Neither reference teaches or suggests a housing construction having a side that extends less than a substantial majority of the length of a module card such that a substantial portion of the rear end of the module card is exposed.

At least for this reason, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 1, and dependent claims 2-3 and 6 are patentable.

II. Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Benda et al. (U.S. Patent 6,241,562) and further in view of Richard (U.S. Patent 4,441,140). Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Benda et al. (U.S. Patent 6,241,562) and further in view of Ross et al. (U.S. Patent 6,570,770). Claims 7 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Benda et al. (U.S. Patent 6,241,562) and further in view of Wong et al. (U.S. Patent 6,028,771). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Claim 4-5, 7, and 18 depend upon claim 1. In light of the above comments regarding independent claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that dependent claims 4-5, 7, and 18 are patentable.

III. Claims 8-9 and 12-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Benda et al. (U.S. Patent 6,241,562) in view of Wong et al. (U.S. Patent 6,028,771). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, but have amended claims 8 and 13 to advance this application to allowance.

A. Claims 8-9 and 12

Claim 8 has been amended to incorporate the interchangeable feature described above with respect to claim 1. In particular, claim 8 now recites a module including a housing having a face plate and a housing side. A module card is secured to the housing. The housing side has a length that extends less than a substantial majority of a length defined by front and rear ends of the module card such that a substantial portion of the rear end of the module card is exposed.

Benda teaches a two-piece housing 20, 30 designed to completely enclose a printed circuit board 200. Each of the housing pieces 20, 30 extends along the entire length of the printed circuit board 200. Wong does not make up for the deficiencies of Benda, as Wong similarly teaches a cover 12 that extends along the entire length of a printed circuit board subassembly 14. Neither reference teaches or suggests a housing construction having a side that extends less than a substantial majority of the length of a module card such that a substantial portion of the rear end of the module card is exposed.

B. Claims 13-17

Claim 13 similarly recites a method including the provision of a housing and a module card, wherein the housing extends less than a substantial majority of the length of the module card such that a substantial portion of the rear end of the module card is exposed when the module card is interconnected to the housing.

Benda teaches a two-piece housing 20, 30 designed to completely enclose a printed circuit board 200. Each of the housing pieces 20, 30 extends along the entire length of the

printed circuit board 200. Wong does not make up for the deficiencies of Benda, as Wong similarly teaches a cover 12 that extends along the entire length of a printed circuit board subassembly 14. Neither reference teaches or suggests a housing that extends less than a substantial majority of the length of a module card such that a substantial portion of a rear end of the module card is exposed.

At least for the above reason, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 8 and 13, and dependent claims 9, 12, and 14-17 are patentable.

IV. Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Benda et al. (U.S. Patent 6,241,562) and further in view of Wong et al. (U.S. Patent 6,028,771). Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Benda et al. (U.S. Patent 6,241,562) and further in view of Ross et al. (U.S. Patent 6,570,770). Claim 19 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Benda et al. and further in view of Campbell et al. (U.S. Patent 7,187,555). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Claims 10-11 and 19 depend upon claim 8. In light of the above comments regarding independent claim 8, Applicants respectfully submit that dependent claims 10-11 and 19 are patentable.

SUMMARY

It is respectfully submitted that each of the presently pending claims (claims 1-19) is in condition for allowance and notification to that effect is requested. The Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' representative at the below-listed telephone number if it is believed that prosecution of this application may be assisted thereby.

Although certain arguments regarding patentability are set forth herein, there may be other arguments and reasons why the claimed invention is patentably distinct. Applicants reserve the right to raise these arguments in the future.



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Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Karen A. Fitzsimmons". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Karen A. Fitzsimmons

Reg. No. 50,470

KAF:cjc